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NEWS *release*

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'Healthy Eating' Focus of New Initiative for Polar Games

WHITEHORSE – When some 700 students converge at the Canada Games Centre this Friday, they'll hear a new Polar Games message. Health and Social Services Minister Brad Cathers today announced a new healthy eating initiative entitled "Eat Right, Kick Butt" for the Polar Games, which run Feb. 29-March 1, 2008.

This year, in conjunction with health promotion, the department is providing each participant with a backpack containing information on healthy eating and the link between making healthy food choices and performing well in both sporting activities and academic pursuits. Contents include a bottle of water, fruit bar, and a coupon for a healthy food item at school concessions. Funding for the project is provided through the Territorial Health Access Fund.

"Proper nutrition is important, both for participation in physical activities as well as for cognitive development," Cathers said. "The department has been working together with Polar Games organizers and teachers to provide children with some healthy eating alternatives at the Games concessions this year. Each student will also receive a coupon for a free healthy item at the concession."

Dave Stockdale, long-time organizer of the Games is pleased with the healthy eating initiative. "We're happy to support an initiative that gets youth thinking about making healthier choices during the Games," Stockdale said. "Hopefully what they learn about proper nutrition during the Games will carry over and they will make healthier choices after the Games as well."

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Polar Games is an annual event where children in Grades 5 and 6 from almost all Yukon communities meet in Whitehorse to participate in a number of sporting events such as floor hockey, bowling, curling and volleyball. The event is non-competitive and promotes sportsmanship and teamwork.

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